



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

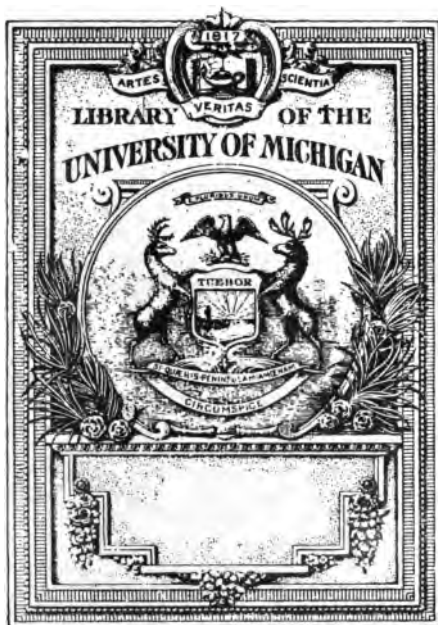
HQ
27.5
.L38
1913

THE
EDWARD BOK
BOOKS
OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
AND PARENTS

THE CHANGING GIRL



CAROLINE WORMELEY LATIMER



THE GIFT OF
Prof. Mabel E. Rugen

Read for "general" statement

But historical - especially

I doubt if we have found
a more complete statement

Big question -

... scientific

Remember to take down

... -

The Changing Girl

*The Edward Bok Books of Self-
Knowledge for Young People
and Parents*

Edited by EDWARD BOK

The constant aim of this graded series is to be anticipatory. Each separate treatise is concise, lucid, never suggestive beyond the age limit. Each, •35

FOR PARENTS

1. *How Shall I Tell My Child?* A Little Book for Parents by Mrs. Woodallen Chapman.

FOR BOYS

2. *When a Boy Becomes a Man.* A Little Book for Boys by H. Bisseker, M. A.

FOR YOUNG MEN

3. *Instead of Wild Oats.* A Little Book for the Youth of Eighteen and Over, by Winfield Scott Hall, M. D.

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

4. *The Spark of Life.* The Story of How Living Things Came Into the World. As Told for Boys and Girls, by Margaret W. Morley.

FOR GIRLS

5. *The Changing Girl.* A Little Book for the Girl of Ten to Fifteen, by Caroline Latimer, M. D., M. A.

FOR OLDER GIRLS

6. *In Her Teens.* For Girls from Thirteen to Nineteen, by Mrs. Woodallen Chapman.

THE EDWARD BOK BOOKS

Of Self-Knowledge for Parents and Young People
Of Which This Is Number Five

The Changing Girl

*A Little Book for the
Girl of Ten to Fifteen*

By

CAROLINE WORMELEY LATIMER, M. D., M. A.

Former Instructor in Biology, Goucher College

With a Foreword

By EDWARD BOK

Editor of the Ladies' Home Journal



NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Pub
HQ
27.5
L38
1913

Copyright, 1913, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

Lib
Gift Prof. Mabel L. Rugh
4-7-93
7882178
publ

Contents

A FOREWORD		7
I. THE PHYSICAL CHANGES		9
II. THE MENTAL AND MORAL CHANGES		36
III. THE SOCIAL CHANGES		49



A Foreword

UNTIL recently it was deemed the better part of parental wisdom to allow a girl to reach that period in her life when she changes from girlhood into womanhood without any knowledge of what the change meant. As a result of this policy of silence, thousands of girls found themselves suddenly confronted with physical and moral changes that were a source of alarm to them and filled them with misgivings from which it took them years to recover. Some never fully recovered.

But the fallacy of silence finally led to such fearful results in so many instances that the public conscience was awakened, and a decided change has come in the general mental attitude on this question. With this healthy change of sentiment came a universal desire for some little book that would explain in a simple and yet authoritative manner, by a reliable pen, just what those changes in a girl from her tenth to her fifteenth year mean and how they can be intelligently understood and rationally met.

This little book by Doctor Latimer is designed to meet this need, and, to my mind, it meets it with singular success. The author's

A Foreword

authority to write such a book is unquestioned, and that is the first essential point. Her ability to explain what she knows is likewise singularly fortunate. But the chief value of her treatment of the subject is not alone that she explains but she counsels in each instance and points the girl the safe way to meet the change in her life. And she does it delicately. She goes farther than the mere physical changes, as any writer on this subject must do, but so seldom does, and points out the effects of the physical changes on the mental, moral and social tendencies. Doctor Latimer makes her book, therefore, a complete little guide within the compass of her space. If a girl, at the changing period in her life, intelligently reads and remembers what is said in this little book, she will have an understanding of her physical and moral self that will give her exactly the knowledge that every girl should have.

No mother need have the slightest hesitation to place this little book in the hands of her daughter. With a clearness born of a knowledge true and sure, and with a reserve that reflects the careful writer and the woman of judgment, this little book may be freely given and freely read. To every girl from ten to fifteen years it can be worth its weight in gold.

EDWARD BOK.

Philadelphia, 1913.

I

THE PHYSICAL CHANGES

DURING childhood a little girl is mentally and physically much the same as a little boy, but when she is between twelve and fourteen, and often very suddenly, there comes a change. She grows taller, her figure shows signs of womanly development and other indications of womanhood begin to be seen. These changes are connected with the great natural force, *sex*, which is now making itself felt, and they show that it will not be long before the function peculiar to women makes its appearance.

MENSTRUATION

The outward sign of this function is the discharge every four weeks of a flow of blood from the external sex organs. It is spoken of familiarly by various colloquial names, such as "courses," "periods," "being unwell," etc., but its correct title is *menstruation*, a term taken from two Greek words, one of which means month and the other to flow. I intend to avoid the use of technical terms altogether in this little book, but I make an exception.

The Changing Girl

for this one word, partly because I can express myself more clearly by using it, but also because I think it is well for a girl to become familiar with the term, since an acquaintance with it facilitates her obtaining information on the subject and relieves her from embarrassment when she has occasion to refer to it.

Menstruation exists only in human beings and a few of the higher apes. It is due to a congestion of the inner surface of the *uterus*, or womb, the organ in which the child develops before birth. This congestion causes the blood vessels to become swollen and then to break down; the blood escaping from them mixes with mucus from the glands in the interior of the uterus and then passes out, first from the uterus itself and then from the external sex organs. The *ovaries*, which supply the *ovum* or germ from which the future child is formed, are situated one on each side of the uterus, each ovary being connected with the uterus by means of a fine, thin, delicate tube. When the ovum is given off from the ovary, it passes down the connecting tube into the uterus. In married women it may be fertilized while passing through the tube and develop into a child; if it is not fertilized, it withers up and disappears. Every four weeks, from the time a woman is thirteen or fourteen until she is

The Physical Changes

between forty and fifty, an ovum is given off from one or other of the ovaries—unless one is already developing in the uterus—and this activity of the ovary is accompanied by the discharge of blood from the uterus. Why the germ should be thrown off every four weeks and why its escape from the ovary should be accompanied by a discharge from the uterus, we do not know. The subject is peculiarly hard to investigate and for the present we must be satisfied with the knowledge that there is undoubtedly a close connection between the two.

A little while before menstruation first appears, certain signs of it, as I said just now, are to be seen. The little girl begins to grow very fast indeed, the breasts become round and plump, hair appears under the arms and over the external sex organs, and the voice loses its childish tone and assumes that of a woman. The usual age for first menstruation, estimated by statistics taken from thousands of girls in the public schools all over the United States, is a little over fourteen, but it may appear as early as ten or eleven or at maybe as late as seventeen or eighteen without being unnatural. It almost always appears in a girl at about the same age that it did in her mother, and if it was earlier or later than usual in the mother's case, the peculiarity will probably

The Changing Girl

be repeated in the daughter's. For menstruation to be established at an unusually early age is generally the sign of a vigorous reproductive system. When it appears later than is customary, the delay is commonly due to a feeble condition of health, in which case its non-appearance is a good thing, since it saves the girl from a drain upon her strength for which it is not prepared. *Nothing should ever be done to force the appearance of the function.*

Normal Conditions During Menstruation

From time immemorial the interval of time between the periods has been accepted as four weeks, or, to be precise, twenty-eight days. This apparent connection with the lunar month is the reason why the function was believed, in ancient times, to be under the control of the moon. There are a few, a very few exceptions, in which the interval is more or less than twenty-eight days, the most common of them being three weeks. Four weeks, however, may be regarded as the standard, though almost any occasional peculiarity may exist together with perfect health. After the first period menstruation may not return for a long time and when it does reappear, it will probably be irregular for some months, if not years. After regularity is established, however, the periods ought to return at the regular interval

The Physical Changes

all through menstrual life, though slight variations of a day or two are not uncommon. With some women the periods return with absolute regularity, almost to the hour; with other women, whose health is just as good, they are always a little out of season, either before or after; with still another class of women, they are regular as a rule, but subject to occasional irregularity. A slight degree of variation is rather more common than perfect regularity.

The duration of the period is subject to individual differences within certain definite limits. In the majority of cases it lasts from three to five days, but there are not a few instances where it lasts but two days or even only one day. At the other extreme, it is not uncommon for it to continue for six days and occasionally, though rarely, for seven days. Each woman has her own individual standard which is the right thing for her and irregularity in this respect is of more consequence as regards health than irregularity in the interval of time between the periods.

The amount of the discharge also presents great individual variations. What is normal for one woman is excessive for another or deficient for a third. One thing, however, is the same in all cases, namely, that the greater part of the whole amount is lost during the first

The Changing Girl

two days, so that there is not so much difference as might appear between cases lasting two days and those lasting five or six. It is impossible, of course, to estimate the amount of the flow with perfect accuracy, but the usual way of doing so, by the number of protectives used, answers the purpose fairly well, since the important thing is not so much the total quantity as an increase or decrease from what is customary in any particular case. For an increase over normal, even though it lasts but a short time, is a great strain upon the physical powers, while a decrease is almost always associated with a failure of the general health. In a general way it may be said that if more than two protectives are *really needed* in twenty-four hours, the flow is too free, but this estimate must be taken guardedly, for there are many perfectly healthy women who go beyond it. I emphasize the word *needed* here, because more protectives than are actually required by the amount of the flow are often used for reasons of comfort or neatness.

Most women suffer more or less pain and discomfort at the menstrual periods, the result apparently of civilization, which has made our nervous systems much more sensitive than they were originally, since the women of uncivilized nations do not suffer at all. Women who lead leisure lives and those who are engaged in in-

The Physical Changes

tellectual employment are more subject to pain than women who do hard manual labour.

The menstrual disturbance usually takes the form of pain in the lower abdomen and the back, extending down the thighs. In some cases the pain is violent and spasmodic; in others it is dull and continuous. Sometimes it is accompanied by languor and exhaustion; sometimes by nervous irritability. A good many girls have more or less headache. Occasionally the disturbance assumes forms quite unconnected with the organs concerned in menstruation. Headache, for instance, may be the only form of suffering, in which case it is commonly very severe. Nausea and vomiting, pains in the joints, disturbance of the eyesight, and skin eruptions are all quite common. These facts, together with others too technical for discussion here, leave no doubt that menstrual suffering is due to the excitement of the nervous system that accompanies the escape of the ovum from one or other of the ovaries and not to the condition of the organs concerned in menstruation.

Care of the Health During Menstruation

It is most important that the health should receive proper care during menstruation, but it is not at all desirable that a girl should be

The Changing Girl

an invalid. It is not necessary for her to stay in bed, as long as the function is normal, nor is there any reason why she should not go to school or keep up with her usual occupation whatever that may be. If the distance between her home and the school is not great, say not more than a mile, there is no objection to her walking there and back, provided she is carefully protected from cold and wet. A sudden chill may cause a stoppage of the flow and should this happen, its return is apt to be accompanied by a great deal of suffering. If a girl gets her feet wet, she must be very careful to change her shoes and stockings as soon as possible.

Another very important point in the care of menstruation is the state of the bowels. Constipation is responsible for a great deal of pain and discomfort at such times, the reason for which becomes plain when we recall that the last division of the intestines, the *rectum*, lies directly behind the uterus and ovaries, so that if the rectum is full of little bits of hardened feces, as it is apt to be in constipation, they press upon these organs, which are swollen and tender during menstruation, and cause a great deal of pain. Much suffering may be prevented by taking a mild aperient just before the period is due or immediately on its appearance.

The Physical Changes

The common belief that a cold bath should never be taken during menstruation is a mistaken one. A plunge bath in a tub full of cold water may not be always safe, though not a few girls take it without the slightest ill-effects, but there is never any reason why a cold sponge bath should not be used. Whatever kind of bath is employed, it must be followed by brisk friction with a rough towel or a flesh-brush and the room where the rubbing down and the subsequent dressing are carried on ought always to be warm. The risk in taking a cold bath at such times lies in being chilled afterwards and so stopping the flow. The parts exposed to the menstrual discharge should be washed at least twice a day with warm water and as soon as the period is over a warm tub bath should be taken.

Many women are in the habit of using a vaginal douche after menstruation, but it is a mistake for young girls to do so, since it is not required by cleanliness and the introduction of anything, no matter how small nor how carefully handled, into the vagina, may injure the delicate membrane at its entrance.

Violent physical exertion ought to be avoided during the periods. The question of just how much can be done without undue effort must be decided for herself by each particular girl. Some girls can play hockey, basket-ball, or

The Changing Girl

tennis, or take long walks without being at all the worse for it, but most of them are better in the long run for leaving off such amusements, or at all events for enjoying them in great moderation at such times. Playing in match games of athletics is peculiarly harmful, because on such occasions the excitement and emotional tension associated with competition increase the nervous disturbance and greatly interfere with the special purpose of menstrual hygiene, which is to protect the nervous system from strain. Overfatigue of the mind is just as much to be guarded against as overfatigue of the body. A healthy young girl ought not to find her regular school work too much for her, but she should avoid taking examinations at such times, whenever it is possible, and all additional or especially trying work, which is under her control, should be postponed for a few days.

The injurious effects of overexertion, whether of mind or body, are not always immediately apparent, nor does a little additional effort or excitement at any one menstrual period do much harm. It is the repetition of such efforts month after month and year after year which causes the nervous strain to roll up like a snowball, until, at last, there comes a day when the girl is overwhelmed by it, though by the time this happens, the original cause is

The Physical Changes

often so far in the past that she fails to perceive the connection. The harm done to the nervous system may show itself by increased suffering at the periods or it may take the form of a general exhaustion, the reason for which remains obscure to the sufferer and her friends. Many an attack of nervous prostration, for which it seems hard to assign a cause, is due, at any rate in part, to overexertion of body and mind at the menstrual periods continued over a number of years.

Of course, it is obvious that a girl cannot always escape exertion and excitement at the periods, but if she will do what is within her power to avoid them, it will be sufficient, in most cases, to protect her against the regular repetition of nervous strain, which is the most harmful feature in the case.

Menstruation may depart from normal in three ways, namely, *extreme pain*, *deficiency*, and *excess*. In young girls these variations are generally due to disturbance of the general health or of the nervous system and very rarely to organic disease.

Painful Menstruation

The most common disturbance of menstruation is extreme pain. It is not altogether easy to say when the pain is extreme, since a certain amount of it must be considered normal,

The Changing Girl

still there are two points which, if they are present, may be accepted as a reasonable assurance that the suffering is more than is natural, though their absence is no guarantee to the contrary. These are : a steady increase in the pain each month and a failure of the general health.

Pain accompanying menstruation is of two kinds. The commonest or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say the best recognized form, is violent spasmodic pain in the lower part of the abdomen and back, coming on in paroxysms, which last for a minute or two and then subside, to return in a short time. This form of suffering begins with the appearance of menstruation or sometimes a little before it and is usually over by the end of twenty-four hours. The other variety is a dull continuous pain, especially marked in the back and accompanied by a dragging sensation as if everything within the abdomen were falling downward. It usually begins a day or two before menstruation appears and continues all through the period, though it lessens in severity as time goes on.

The spasmodic form of menstrual suffering is so much more striking than the dull variety that many people do not recognize any other, and the dull form may escape notice for a long time, during which the general health may be

The Physical Changes

greatly injured by it. I have known a case in which a young woman suffered for ten or fifteen years from the dull form of pain, severe enough, as time went on, to seriously affect her health, yet neither she nor her mother had any suspicion that the suffering was excessive, because she did not at any time experience the cramp-like form of it.

It is important to remember that menstrual pain is very rarely due to disease or displacement of the uterus or ovaries, especially in young girls. The most intense suffering can exist with perfectly normal healthy organs, while, on the other hand, disease of the most serious nature can be present without any pain whatever during menstruation. Nor does this imply that the suffering is imaginary or hysterical. It is absolutely real. Perhaps the best way to see this matter clearly is to compare it with headache. We all know that the most violent headache does not mean that there is anything the matter with the head itself; the pain is due to a disturbance of the nervous system, expressing itself in the form of pain in the head. The same explanation holds good for menstrual suffering. The disturbance of the nervous system, due to the activity of the ovaries at this time, expresses itself by pain in the neighbourhood of the organs concerned in menstruation, though they themselves are usually perfectly

The Changing Girl

healthy and normal. Why one girl should suffer little, if at all, while another girl, just as healthy, suffers intensely, is one of the things we do not yet understand. Of course, we can say that the nervous disturbance is greater in one case than in the other, but that is only stating the problem a little differently.

Relief of Menstrual Pain

The best means for the immediate relief of menstrual pain is *heat*, applied both externally and internally. Hot water bags and counter-irritation by means of mustard plasters over the lower part of the back and abdomen is the best means of applying it externally. The only means of applying it internally, of course, is hot drinks. Tea and coffee are very good for this purpose, especially if a girl is not in the habit of drinking either of them, but herb teas, hot lemonade, in fact, any form of hot beverage answers the requirements of the case, provided it does not contain alcohol. The common belief in hot gin and water or hot whiskey and water as a panacea for this particular kind of suffering is responsible for many cases of the alcohol habit, for the danger of encouraging a taste for alcohol is always present when it is given for the relief of pain that returns at regular intervals. The same objection applies to the use of patent remedies ad-

The Physical Changes

vertised to relieve menstrual suffering, most of which contain opium or cocain. Many cases of the cocain and opium habit have their beginning in the use of these remedies and it ought to be a fixed rule with every girl and woman not to take, nor to give to those under her care any medicine that has not been approved by a physician.

For the permanent relief of painful menstruation the one great remedy is *rest in bed*. Every girl who suffers from it ought to stay in bed as long as the pain continues, whether it is twenty-four hours or a week. It is a good plan to begin the rest a few hours before the period is due, if it returns with sufficient accuracy to make it possible. If the pain is over early in the period, as it usually is in the cramp-like form, there is no reason why a girl should not resume her daily life. If her general health is at all impaired, it should be built up by means of extra nourishment, fresh air, gymnastic exercises, and any other measures suggested by common sense and experience.

It is rarely advisable to take a girl from school altogether, but it is better she should not go during the period, even though she is quite free from pain during the latter part of it. Amusements necessitating late hours and excitement are not desirable for her, since she ought to get as much sleep as possible, but we

The Changing Girl

must not forget that pleasure and recreation are necessary to keep the nervous system in good order, and painful menstruation is quite as likely to be associated with a dull, dreary, empty life, devoid of interest, as it is with one over-full of amusement and excitement. An occasional afternoon or evening at the theatre or a dance once in a while are more likely to do good than harm.

Rest in bed during the period ought to be kept up as long as the extreme pain continues. When this is relieved, the usual manner of life may be resumed, but if the pain returns, the practice of staying in bed must be resumed. This may seem something of a hardship, but after all, one day, or even two or three days out of each month is not such a very high price to pay for freedom from suffering and, as a matter of fact, not many girls have to give up more than twenty-four hours after the pain is once under control.

Deficient Menstruation

Deficiency of menstruation may be due to the periods being shorter than usual, or by the intervals between them being longer than usual, or by the amount of the discharge being less than usual. Sometimes all three variations exist at the same time, sometimes only

The Physical Changes

one, or, it may be, two of them. In all forms of deficiency the colour of the discharge is apt to be paler than normal. Its natural colour at first is a dark red, which changes to scarlet as the flow becomes free, but when it is deficient in any one of the ways mentioned, it becomes light red and sometimes pink.

In most cases deficiency is due to failure of the general health and under these circumstances it is a benefit rather than an evil, for it saves the bodily powers from a strain which may easily be too much for them if the health is below par. A decrease in menstruation is Nature's way of saving strength.

In acute diseases menstruation is usually absent altogether, though not always. In chronic ailments there are commonly long intervals between the periods which may be so long that the function seems to be completely suppressed. This state of things is especially marked in tuberculosis and the fact has given rise to a common impression that the absence of menstruation is the cause of the disease. There is no foundation whatever for this idea, but I call attention to it, because it can do a great deal of harm by causing delay in seeking medical advice and also by leading to the use of patent remedies advertised to bring on the periods. *Such remedies ought never to be used in any case of deficient menstruation whether due*

The Changing Girl

to tuberculosis or not. They do not often have any effect at all upon the function, but if they should bring it on, it is the worst thing possible for the patient, since Nature's plan for saving her strength is thereby frustrated. Nothing should be done to interfere with such a state of things except through measures for the improvement of the general health, which should be built up by all the measures likely to improve it. Great attention should be paid to the bowels, for constipation and deficiency of menstruation go hand-in-hand. The only medicines that it is safe to take without medical advice are iron and cod-liver oil.

Sometimes menstruation is suddenly checked during a period from exposure to cold and wet, and such a stoppage is apt to be accompanied by severe pain. The best means of relief are to give the sufferer a hip bath in water as hot as can be borne and then put her to bed, warmly covered up, with hot water bags around her and a mustard plaster over the lower part of the abdomen. The pain is generally relieved by these measures and sometimes the flow is reëstablished. In other cases it does not return until the next period and occasionally it fails to reappear at all. If it does not return at the second period after the one that is checked, the family physician should be consulted.

The Physical Changes

Increased Menstruation

Menstruation may be increased by the flow being too free, by the periods lasting too long, or by the intervals between them being too short. Sometimes the increase takes place so gradually that it escapes attention and this possibility should never be overlooked if a girl's health shows signs of failure without apparent cause, even though there does not seem anything wrong on first inquiry. Increase of menstruation is more important than deficiency or excessive pain, partly because it is more likely to be associated with disease or pain, but mainly because it is more injurious to the health. Deficiency, as we have seen, is an actual protection to the health, and extreme pain, though it may injure health eventually, takes a long time to do so. Increased menstruation, on the other hand, even though it is but slight, is one of the surest and speediest ways of undermining the physical powers. It is important that these facts should be appreciated, because women are rather apt to think all disturbances of menstruation must be of equal importance, since they are all interruptions to the established order of things.

Excess of menstruation may be due to general ill health just as deficiency may be, though for another reason. Most forms of ill health are accompanied by poverty of the blood and

The Changing Girl

it is a singular fact that just when the blood is poor and every drop of it is most needed, it has a tendency to escape with unusual readiness. The same cause, therefore, which in the one condition tends to diminish menstruation may, in the other, be responsible for its increase. Another cause for excessive menstruation is a slow and imperfect development of the blood vessels in the uterus and ovaries during the first few years after menstruation appears. In a few cases the excess is due to a thickening and roughening of the mucous membrane lining the interior of the uterus, just as the membrane lining the nose and throat is sometimes thickened and roughened.

Rest during the periods is the chief remedy for excessive menstruation. Every girl suffering from it ought to stay in bed for at least two days and if she is up and about during the latter part of the time, she ought to be as quiet and as little on her feet as possible. Girls who are in the habit of taking a great deal of active exercise will find it a good plan to begin a modified rest just before the period is expected, that is, to refrain from long walks, basket-ball, tennis, and other forms of vigorous exertion.

Nervous Influences Affecting Menstruation

Before leaving the subject of menstruation,

The Physical Changes

I want to say a word as to the influence of the nervous system upon it and the manner in which it is displayed. Change of climate, or even change of scene is liable to be followed by irregularity of one kind or another. In some cases where the change involves a great difference in altitude, the variations of blood pressure that accompany such a change may cause irregularity. A visit to the seashore, where the blood pressure is lowered, is apt to be followed by an excess of menstruation, while a visit to the mountains, where blood pressure is raised, commonly results in a deficiency. But very often these irregularities accompany a change of so short a distance that the question of altitude cannot enter into them. A friend of mine, living about ten miles from a large city, who had several daughters, told me that when her daughters' friends came from the city to visit them, they were very often surprised by the immediate appearance of menstruation, though it might not be expected for some time. This is but a single instance of a common experience. Again, a sudden shock, whether of grief, of joy, or of terror, if it occurs during a period, may cause a sudden stoppage of the flow or, if it takes place just before the period is due, the flow may not appear at all. I once knew a young girl who had an abscess in a tooth, which caused her

The Changing Girl

several sleepless nights and made it impossible for her to eat just at the time a period was expected. The loss of food and sleep depressed her vitality to such an extent that the period failed to appear altogether. All these facts bear witness to the influence of the nervous system upon menstruation and if this is understood, a great deal of needless anxiety will often be spared.

Specialized Advice for Disorders of Menstruation

Another point upon which I should like to say a word before leaving this subject is the question of specialized advice for disorders of menstruation. I have tried to show that such difficulties are due, for the most part, at any rate in young girls, to failure of the general health or disturbance of the nervous system, which call for general medical attention, if they require any at all. But there are occasional cases where the opinion of a specialist in women's diseases is really needed and it is just as foolish and just as wrong to delay seeking such an opinion from indifference or false modesty as it is to rush into such a step without due cause.

There are two points upon which reliance can be placed in coming to a decision as to the necessity for seeking the advice of a specialist.

The Physical Changes

In the first place, the possibility of local treatment being needed is greater in the case of excessive menstruation than it is in deficiency or extreme pain ; in the second place, the probability of disease or displacement is greater, if there is pain during the intervals between the periods than if it is confined to the periods themselves, especially if there is also a whitish or yellowish discharge during the intervals.

In cases of deficient menstruation every attention should be paid to the general health and if improvement does not follow after several months of such care and attention the family doctor ought to be consulted in regard to the general health. It is rarely necessary to consult a specialist in regard to deficient menstruation. When the trouble is extreme pain or excessive flow, it is well to give the plan of rest during the periods a thorough trial before taking any further steps and if, at the end of several months, there is some improvement, even if it is slight, it is best to try for some time longer. If no improvement at all can be perceived by the end of six months (speaking generally) the question of consulting a specialist ought usually to be considered.

When there seems really no doubt that the advice of a specialist is needed, the choice of one becomes a matter of no small importance. Sometimes the selection can be left to the

The Changing Girl

family physician, but if it devolves upon the patient herself or her family, the best thing to be done is to find out who is in charge of the department of women's diseases at the nearest medical school of good standing and consult him, either at the medical school or at his private office. His name and address can always be obtained by sending to the school in question for one of its circulars, which will contain them. It is worth while to take trouble and, if necessary, go to some expense to find out the best man available under the circumstances.

CHANGES CONNECTED WITH GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The establishment of menstruation is of course the central feature of girlhood, but there are other associated physical changes that demand a word of mention. The most striking of these is rapidity of growth, which is sometimes so marked as to be absolutely startling. This rapidity of growth exposes a girl to certain peculiar dangers, the chief of which arise from the possibility of change in the shape of the bones. At this age the bones are still soft and pliant, so that they yield easily to pressure, and if a girl stands with the weight of the body constantly thrown to the same side or sits with it always inclined in the same direction,

The Physical Changes

as in writing, studying, etc., she is liable to have a spinal curvature, yet when she is growing very fast indeed, it is hard for her to hold herself always upright. Schools are now very careful as to the height and shape of the seats provided for their scholars as well as the attitudes assumed by them and many schools have gymnasiums attached to them in which a sharp lookout is kept for the first sign of curvature. Still, a good deal of a girl's time is passed at home and while there, it rests with herself and her parents to see that she avoids ungainly attitudes.

The question of corsets, which comes up in this connection, is one upon which there is great difference of opinion. To my thinking, there is no reason why a girl should not wear corsets, provided they are well fitting and not drawn too tight. Tight lacing can do a great deal more harm at this age than it can do later, because the bones forming the chest wall are still soft and their shape, as well as the position of the organs within the chest, is easily changed by pressure from without. A little later in life, when the bones have hardened, their shape cannot be permanently affected by pressure.

In early girlhood the heart and arteries do not grow at exactly the same rate of speed, the result of which is that the circulation is more

The Changing Girl

or less disturbed and irregular, giving rise to disturbances of various kinds, such as cold hands and feet and bleeding from the nose, both of which are common in girlhood. Blushing is induced with peculiar readiness in young girls for the same reason. Sometimes the action of the heart is disturbed and there may be palpitation with shortness of breath, in which case it is well to consult a physician.

Skin eruptions, especially on the face, are very frequent at this age, owing to sluggishness and inactivity of the sweat glands, numbers of which are situated upon the face. There is a common idea that troubles of this kind ought not to be interfered with, for fear, apparently, of some mysterious evil consequences that may follow interference. No doubt such eruptions do get well by themselves after a while, but it may be a very long while, and in the meantime they are the source of continual mortification and distress of mind to a young girl, at a time in her life when she is peculiarly sensitive to her appearance. Furthermore, if they persist for any length of time, the clearness and smoothness of the skin is more or less injured. Trivial or occasional troubles do not, of course, require treatment, but an extensive or persistent eruption ought to be placed under the care of a doctor and, if possible, a specialist in skin diseases.

The Physical Changes

There are, however, two perfectly harmless and efficacious remedies at every one's command. One of these is the relief of constipation, which is almost always associated with skin troubles; the other is the regular use of hot water and soap. There is no better stimulus for the sluggish sweat glands than washing the face every night just before going to bed with water as hot as can be borne and a good soap, so that the "pores" or openings of the glands may be thoroughly relaxed by the heat and moisture. These measures, if conscientiously carried out, will almost always effect great improvement and often a complete cure.

In some girls the nervous system is a good deal upset at this age; in others it shows little or no signs of disturbance. It is not possible here to discuss the various forms in which it may be affected. The subject is too extensive and too complicated. But it is unnecessary to do so, since any form of such disturbance, except occasional headache, ought to be under the care of a physician.

II

THE MENTAL AND MORAL CHANGES

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

THE most striking mental change in early girlhood is the development of self-consciousness and with it the growth of independent personality. When a young woman has achieved success in life, some one is pretty sure to remark, "Well, I knew her as a child and I never saw anything remarkable about her." On the other hand, we often hear it said, "I knew So-and-So when she was a little girl and she was such a smart little thing that I thought she would turn out a remarkable woman. But she hasn't done anything in particular." All this is just what we should expect. Children are natural imitators and take their colour, so to speak, from other people. They show a great deal of quickness and intelligence in acquiring knowledge and reflecting ideas along lines suggested to them by their elders, but the capacity for independent thought rarely develops until childhood is over, so that originality of mind is not likely to show itself in a child.

It is at this period, when independence of

The Mental and Moral Changes

thought develops, that a girl begins to look out upon the world around her with her own eyes. She realizes for the first time that she has a place of her own in the universe and, as a natural consequence, she begins to reflect upon her personal relation to the world at large and to form opinions from her experiences in it. The effect of all this is to make her aware of her *Ego* in a way she has never been before and so, for a time, she carries the consciousness of it into every phase of her existence. As a result of all this some girls become shy and awkward, because they are afraid of doing or saying something that will call attention to their own ignorance and inexperience, while others are inclined to assert themselves too strenuously and to place undue confidence in their own opinions, because their new sense of individuality is struggling for expression.

One sign of the self-consciousness of the period is a burning interest in personal appearance. The young girl begins to take pleasure in everything connected with herself, whether it pertains to her mind or her body. Her clothes, her toilet, her personal habits, the attractiveness of her surroundings, all assume great importance in her eyes. She spends a great deal of time upon her hair and develops a lively interest in manicuring. The beautifying of her room and the possession of elabo-

The Changing Girl

rate toilet appointments are second in importance only to her personal adornment. Of course, all this may be carried too far and it may assume foolish or extravagant forms, as in a girl of my acquaintance who wished to take three baths a day and when told that it was quite unnecessary beside being very inconvenient to other members of the family, she replied in a most piteous and injured tone, "Mamma, would you have me go dirty?" In general, however, this interest in herself and her belongings, if taken aright, is the best thing in the world for a girl, for this is the time when she must assume the care of her own toilet, her own dress, and her own personality altogether and the awakening interest in herself is the foundation upon which habits of neatness, order, and good taste are to be formed.

But the self-consciousness of the period shows itself in other and deeper ways. At this time in a girl's life her mind is expanding rapidly and in its expansion the qualities connected with imagination and emotion advance more quickly and are more in evidence than those associated with reason and reflection. The forms under which her emotional development show themselves are so many and various that it would be impossible to consider them all here, but there are two in especial, which I think ought not to be passed over

The Mental and Moral Changes

without a word of comment, namely, bad temper and religious ferment.

BAD TEMPER

Bad temper in some form, whether it be passion, sullenness, petulance, or any other of its manifestations, is quite frequent in early girlhood, because the emotional nature is overdeveloped and not yet under the control of the reason. I do not mean that the condition of the emotional nature relieves a girl of responsibility as to her temper. Far from it. She is not to blame, of course, for the excess of emotion present at this period of her life, but she is to blame if she makes it an excuse for yielding to temper without an effort, and her parents are still more to blame if they accept it for her and so fail to aid her in the struggle against this particular weakness of her age.

Bad temper soon becomes a habit, a habit peculiarly easy to acquire and rarely altogether overcome. A girl can do more for herself in the conquest of this particular fault than any one else can do for her and the greatest service that can be rendered her is to inform her mind and arouse her conscience by setting before her plainly the ease with which such a habit will grow upon her as well as its consequences to herself and to others. She ought to realize how comparatively easy it is to control herself, if

The Changing Girl

only she will begin before the temper gets the better of her. If she will drop a subject when she finds annoyance rising, or take some means of distraction when she finds herself brooding over a grievance, fancied or real, do anything, in short, by which, in Scripture phraseology, she may leave off contention before it be meddled with, more than half the battle will be gained.

Another important point in self-control is the conviction that bad temper is never excusable. There is a very common impression that a person is justified in losing his or her temper provided there is sufficient excuse for doing so, but it is a fatal error to admit this theory, for human nature will inevitably take advantage of it. A girl who is contending with bad temper ought to make it a rule to say to herself, "There is no excuse for losing my temper on this occasion." She need not think about a future occasion until it arrives, when the same rule will hold good again. No one, of course, is always successful in controlling bad temper, but failures are much less frequent, when justification is never admitted, since with every such admission, control becomes more difficult.

RELIGIOUS FERMENT

It has always been customary to associate religious excitement in extreme youth with

The Mental and Moral Changes

the development of the sex instinct, but the best authorities on the subject to-day are of opinion that there is no special connection between them. The stimulus that brings about the condition of religious ferment may be of almost any kind. A powerful sermon, from some one with great personal magnetism, a conversation with a friend, a book, a striking incident opening up new trains of thought, anything, in short, that touches the nascent religious sentiment at the psychological moment, is sufficient to supply a match to the train of emotion ready to explode.

Once excited, the religious ferment finds expression in a variety of ways familiar to every one, according to temperament and circumstances, but one thing which comes up for consideration in almost every case is the question of making an open profession of faith of one kind or another. In general, it is the girl who is anxious to take this step while her parents hesitate, because they know, though she finds it hard to believe, that a certain proportion of her religious feeling is due to the emotional excess belonging to her age and that after a few years have passed, she may look at the matter from a different point of view, though not necessarily less earnestly. Sometimes, however, it is the girl who shrinks from committing herself to a definite pledge

The Changing Girl

and the parents who urge it upon her. Every case must be judged according to its own special circumstances, but there would be much less anxiety and heart burning, if each party would try to understand the other's point of view. The girl will be more ready to wait, if she feels that her parents sympathize with her disappointment, while the parents are more likely to believe in the real strength of her feeling, if they are satisfied she is not carried away by excitement.

MORBID CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

The moral nature also feels the disturbing influence of this period. Grave moral delinquencies are not often seen, but what we might call moral peculiarities are quite common at this age. Sometimes a girl takes a most exaggerated view of her duties and responsibilities, while in other cases she seems to lose her moral sense altogether. One common manifestation of this exaggerated feeling is the old Puritan idea that all pleasure is sinful, simply because it is pleasant; another is the conviction of being called to set other people's affairs to rights; still another is wear and tear of conscience about some utterly unimportant trifle, such as verbal inaccuracy, a failure in some self-imposed duty, or some fancied slight or injury to another, for which there is no rest

The Mental and Moral Changes

until forgiveness has been obtained. It is a mistake to treat this extreme sensitiveness with harshness or with ridicule. Nor is it of any use to tell a girl sharply that she ought to take her mind off some supposed fault or negligence over which she is brooding, because no one can take his mind in his two hands, as it were, and set it down somewhere else. There are two outside influences, however, that can be brought to bear with good effect. One of these is care for the bodily state, since a morbid conscience is often associated with unhealthy conditions of life, removal of which will work wonders. The other is to substitute some other form of preoccupation, such as an absorbing piece of work or some social duty requiring the undivided attention, for the dominant idea. This measure is often brilliantly successful in driving out the evil spirit of a morbid conscience.

LOSS OF MORAL SENSE

At the other extreme of moral disturbance the moral sense may be diminished or lost. Untruthfulness is one of the common examples of this, sometimes from dread of punishment, but more often from dread of ridicule on a subject where there is deep feeling. Sometimes there are graver causes, such as vanity or spite and occasionally, though rarely, the desire to gain

The Changing Girl

an end. Dishonesty is not common and when it does occur, it is apt to proceed from a longing for little pleasures and luxuries, natural enough at this age, for which we ought to feel pity rather than blame, though the consciousness of wrong-doing must none the less be brought home to the offended.

It would seem that the use of bad language was an offense peculiar to boys, but, as a matter of fact, girls are by no means exempt from it. Sometimes a girl, who has never before shown the faintest disposition to such a thing, will suddenly begin to use language so bad that it seems impossible she could ever have heard it. These bursts of what might be called innocent profanity are probably a manifestation of the self-consciousness belonging to the period, which prompts a girl to attract attention to herself by means of what is commonly known as "showing off." To do what is shocking is almost as effectual in achieving her purpose as to do what is admired and bad language is, of course, a sure and speedy means to the end in view. This particular fault is the only one for which contempt is useful as a means of cure. Speaking generally, contempt or ridicule are not good things in youthful training, for they have a tendency to injure self-respect, which is of all things important to stimulate. But in this particular class of cases to show oneself

The Mental and Moral Changes

shocked and distressed is just what the offender is aiming at (though she may be quite unconscious of it) and so it is especially to be avoided. Silent contempt or a few words of disgust at such childishness and vulgarity are the best form of treatment, for they offer no encouragement to repeat the offense.

Sometimes the moral disturbance shows itself passively rather than actively, in a lack of will power. The girl does not do anything wrong but she seems to have no impulse to do what is right. One form of this particular failing is incorrigible laziness. A girl goes to school if she is sent, because she has not sufficient energy to resist or to play truant, but when there, she makes no effort to work. Another girl, it may be, is disorderly and wanting in personal neatness, because, apparently, it is too much trouble to take pains, and if her toilet is not supervised like a child's, she will look like a child left to its own devices. Still another variety of this defect is a complete absence of responsibility, so that a girl cannot be trusted with the simplest duties.

Physical causes are often at the bottom of this apparent loss of will power. If a girl's health is feeble, as it sometimes is for a time at this age, she finds all exertion such an effort that she avoids it instinctively. In such cases a little medical advice is the best remedy.

The Changing Girl

If no physical cause exists for the inertia, some stimulus for the sluggish will must be found. Often outsiders are more successful in supplying the desired impulse than members of the family. Change of scene comprising, as it does, a new set of interests and surroundings, sometimes works wonders. It may be a good plan to send a girl to boarding-school or to live with relatives at a distance, where, in addition to the benefit of change, the desire to keep up appearances amongst strangers will supply a stimulus to exertion.

SEXUAL DISTURBANCES

Amongst the mental and moral changes taking place during these years of rapid growth and development we must not forget those directly connected with sex. It is the custom to look upon sexual feeling as confined to boys and men and regard girls as entirely without it, but the apparent absence of sex instinct in girls is largely a matter of training extending over many generations. From time immemorial, girls have been taught to suppress and conceal every vestige of emotion connected with sex, not only from the world at large but from themselves, and the result of all these years of repression has been to create a state of things in which sex instinct in women shows itself only in indirect ways. The nervous dis-

The Mental and Moral Changes

turbance due to the activity of the ovaries accompanying menstruation is (at any rate to some extent) an expression of sexual feeling.

I would earnestly advise every girl to be honest with herself regarding any indications of the sex instinct that she may perceive at this time. The reproductive system is governed by natural laws just as the digestive or respiratory systems are so governed and there is surely no reason why a girl should be afraid or ashamed of what God has made a natural law of her being nor of the fact that He intended her for a wife and mother, though it is right that she should treat all matters concerned with reproduction with reserve, since they are associated with the tenderest of human affections and the nearest of human ties. But for her to accept the facts as the explanation of feelings and emotions which, up to this time, have been unknown to her, is the way to acquire a healthy mind in a healthy body on the sexual side of her nature.

From the time a girl takes entire charge of her own toilet, which is commonly about the age we are now considering, she must be very careful as to the cleanliness of the external sex organs. They should be washed every night and morning with cold water and soap (except during the menstrual period when it is better to use warm water) and dried with a soft towel.

The Changing Girl

If there is any irritation in their neighbourhood, as sometimes happens just before or after menstruation, they must be kept dusted with talcum powder, and if this does not give relief at once, the talcum powder should be mixed with an equal amount of the sub-nitrate of bismuth, which can be procured at any drug store. Except for the care required by cleanliness the sex organs should never be handled.

III

THE SOCIAL CHANGES

I USE the word social here in its widest sense, intending it to cover all the circumstances in a girl's life which bring her into association with other human beings, as well as certain material conditions affecting her welfare and happiness in such relations.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Food and sleep are obviously the two great essentials in a girl's physical welfare at this time in her life, when her rapid growth of body and mind are making incessant demands upon her strength. It would seem that food, at any rate, was always a matter of plain sailing, but experience shows that it is by any means always so. A girl's appetite at this period is often small and capricious, moreover the claims of her school life frequently make it necessary for her to get her meals alone at different hours from the rest of the family. Meals eaten alone are bad for every one since they are apt to be eaten too fast and they lack the influence of pleasant surroundings which is a real stimulus to digestion. In some cases

The Changing Girl

a girl gets her breakfast before her mother and other members of the family are down, and is apt to rush off to school with an insufficient meal on which to begin the day. In other cases, where the whole family breakfast early, the trouble lies rather with dinner. The regular hour for it is probably noon, but the daughter may not get back from school until a couple of hours later, so that her dinner has to be saved and eaten alone, which is bad for her appetite and her digestion. The remedy for this and other like difficulties lies in the hands of older people rather than in those of the girl herself. Her mother or elder sister can do a great deal for her by being down to breakfast with her or by seeing that her dinner is hot and comfortably saved, as well as by sitting with her and talking to her while she eats it. But she is old enough to assume some responsibility in the matter herself, by allowing herself time for her meals, trying to eat slowly, and not indulging in unreasonable fancies nor in feats of abstinence, for which girls have sometimes a strong fancy at this age.

Sleep is almost, if not quite as important as food at this age. Until a girl is fourteen or fifteen, she ought always to have ten hours' sleep and after that not less than nine, until she leaves school. Amusements which keep

The Social Changes

her up late at night ought to be limited to Friday and Saturday evenings, when she can sleep late the next morning.

Next to food and sleep, exercise and fresh air are the most important factors in a girl's health. She ought always to walk to school and back, supposing the distance is not excessive and there is no special reason against it. When this is impossible, she ought to carry on her occupations, such as reading, writing, sewing, etc., as much as possible out-of-doors. The value of outdoor employment from the point of view of health is not yet understood or appreciated, but any one who acquires the habit in youth will be the better for it as long as she lives.

SCHOOL WORK

There is a great deal of talk about injury to health caused by overwork at school, especially at the age which we are now considering. But if these cases of supposed overwork are investigated with an open mind, it will generally appear that it is not the amount of work that is too great, but the girl's strength that is too little. School work is calculated for a girl in normal health, living under normal conditions, and if the conditions of her life are not normal as regards food, sleep, fresh air, or any other factor concerned in it, the work is likely to

The Changing Girl

be too much for her, even though it may be quite reasonable in itself. I do not mean, of course, that school work is never excessive, but the cases in which it is so are few and far between compared with those in which the strength for it is deficient.

The girl herself is not a competent judge of her own fatigue. This is partly because the stimulating atmosphere and constant competition of the modern school keep up an atmosphere of excitement in which fatigue is not easily perceived and still less readily acknowledged and partly because of the curious psychological fact that one effect of continuous fatigue is to make the subject of it unaware of its existence. Fortunately, there are physical signs, apparent to every one, that may be relied upon as a guide. The eyes are dull and often bloodshot, with dark lines under them, the eyelids and muscles of the face twitch, the face has a fretful expression, the corners of the mouth droop, the voice is toneless and flat, and the tired girl will sit with her eyes fixed upon vacancy or on some object that she does not perceive. Failure in habitual self-control is another indication of overfatigue and one very important sign is its continuance into the next day. As long as fatigue passes away with a night's rest and a girl wakes up bright and alert next morning, she is not likely to be

The Social Changes

overtired. But when she gets up every day with the fatigue of the day before still hanging about her, there can be no doubt that it is excessive. Not all these signs are likely to be present in any one case, but some of them will certainly be observable when there is genuine overfatigue.

When it becomes 'plain that a girl is really overtired, the conditions of her life, both at home and at school, must be carefully investigated in order to ascertain where the responsibility for it belongs, and in the meantime, steps for reducing her work should be taken without delay, since it is obviously beyond her strength for the moment, though it may not, in itself, be excessive. It is a fatal mistake to think she can be kept up to the full amount of work by means of tonics and stimulants, for no immediate gain can offset the possibility of permanent injury to health caused by keeping her up to the strain of school life when she is not equal to it. Whether it is wise to take her away from school altogether is a question to be decided by the circumstances in each particular case.

AMUSEMENTS

Social intercourse at this period of a girl's life is a good deal overshadowed by her education, but it has, nevertheless, a definite im-

The Changing Girl

portance in her existence. A normal, healthy young girl has an instinctive craving for pleasure which ought to be gratified. The thing is to gratify it in the right way. Formal entertainments, such as dinners, lunches, afternoon teas, or receptions are not satisfactory amusements for a girl of this age, because she is not old enough nor formed enough to find any real enjoyment in them. On the other hand, entertainments with dancing and games are a source of real pleasure as well as of benefit to body and mind, since they provide a suitable outlet for high spirits and physical activity. Organized entertainments including figure dances in their scheme are especially good, so good that it is worth while to stretch a point as regards late hours to let a girl take part in them. They provide an outlet for her vitality and at the same time they train the body in easy graceful movement, while the costumes and accessories gratify the love of colour and adornment which is so strong at this age.

Theatre-going is a point that calls for a word in itself. On its good side, there is much to be gained from it, both in recreation and in the intellectual training received from seeing good drama and good acting. On the other side—its bad side—it is productive of evil from overexcitement and from the injury to good taste as well as principle arising from

The Social Changes

contact with vulgarity and still more with immorality and immodesty.

It behooves parents to be very careful as to the nature of the plays their daughter goes to see and the character of her escort or companion. No mother ought ever to allow her daughter to go to see a play of which she and her father know nothing and to let her go to matinées, to see every play that comes to town, in company with girls, whom, in many cases, her mother knows little or nothing about, is to expose her to influences of the worst kind.

The same objections apply with even greater force to moving picture shows. There is something, of course, to be said in their favour, for they provide recreation at less expense than is possible to the theatre, while incidentally they give an idea of the geography of foreign countries, as well as their manners and customs. But some of them are very silly and others very vulgar, while still another variety deals in horrors and cruelties which affect the mind most unpleasantly both at the time and afterwards. Moreover, the fact that they take place in the dark affords opportunity for liberty of conduct not present at the theatre.

FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS

All girls wish for youthful companionship and every girl ought to have the opportunity

The Changing Girl

to enjoy so right and innocent a taste. This is peculiarly a matter for a mother's help and sympathy, but it is often made hard for her by the difficulty of forming correct judgments concerning her daughter's friends, especially those of her own sex. The nice well-mannered girl who seems to the mother so desirable a companion may all the time be warping her daughter's mind along the lines of selfishness, worldliness, or vulgarity, or, worse still, introducing her to a knowledge of evil of which she might otherwise be ignorant for years to come. On the other hand, a shy, awkward girl with unformed or uncouth manners may have sterling good qualities.

In the case of boys, mothers are not so easily deceived, because they are more on their guard than they are with girls and less ready to be guided by appearances, but in their case there are difficulties of another kind. Up to this time the boy and girl have played together on the same footing as two little girls, but now the sex instinct begins to awaken in both and a new element enters into their relations, an element just as innocent and natural in itself as that which preceded it, but calling for greater circumspection. The mother's part here is to make sure that these attentions are suitable in character, respectfully offered, and modestly received. Without this watchful-

The Social Changes

ness on a mother's part, a girl may find herself in difficulties, because she does not understand the change in herself nor in her relations to the other sex. It may be that in the innocence of her heart she seeks their companionship a little too openly, not realizing that she is no longer a child, sometimes, on the contrary, she is shy and awkward and gives offense by her clumsy acceptance of attentions. It is a great mistake to put too much restriction upon a girl's intercourse with the other sex at this time in her life, and a still worse one to leave her without restriction altogether. The best plan for a mother to pursue is to encourage visits from boys whom her husband and sons approve and let her daughter entertain them in the family circle, so that she herself knows just what is going on and can form her own opinion of their characters and manners as well as of her daughter's relations with them. A boy who objects to making friends in the family circle belonging to the girl he admires is not a boy to be trusted.

It sometimes happens that the sexual disturbance of the period shows itself along social lines. A girl may be unduly fond of boys' society and she may show her fondness in a bold, disagreeable, even immodest manner, insisting upon seeing her boy acquaintances more frequently than her parents approve. If they

The Changing Girl

object to any particular acquaintance who has taken her fancy, she may insist upon meeting him clandestinely or else openly defy their authority. In such a case it is all important to protect a girl from the disagreeable consequences attending her own words and actions, because, while the sexual excitement which is, to a large extent, at the bottom of her conduct, will subside in the course of a few years, she is liable in the meantime to say or do something that may be cruelly misunderstood, the report of which, once put into circulation, may seriously affect her future. In some cases it may be best to send a girl to boarding-school, where she will be under stricter surveillance than is possible in the family circle, but it is much better, if possible, to keep her at home and try to engage her better self in her own cause. It is a mistake for parents to treat their daughter as if she were still a child and try to settle such affairs over her head without her knowledge. If they will treat her as a woman, even if it be a very young and thoughtless one, they will enlist her confidence and secure a more ready compliance.

SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE

In touching upon the attitude of parents towards matters of conduct connected with the sex instinct, we approach a subject which in

The Social Changes

the last few years has received much attention from educators, I mean the question of sexual knowledge for the young. Our ideas upon this subject have undergone a great change in recent years. It used to be thought that a young girl should remain in complete ignorance of everything related to sex, if possible to the time of her marriage, because any knowledge of such things would, as a dear old lady once said to me, "destroy her beautiful innocence, which is her great charm." Of course, there are still a great many mothers who hold to this idea, but there is every year an increasing number who ask themselves whether they ought not to adopt a different attitude towards their daughters. For those who hold to the old-fashioned point of view, I should like to point out that at the present day it is impossible for a young girl to remain in ignorance of sexual matters up to maturity. In times past, when girls led much more restricted lives than they do now, such a thing was possible, but to-day, in this country at any rate, a girl's mind cannot remain a blank as regards sexual knowledge. Books, newspapers, the theatre, advertisements, servants, and most of all other children, are fertile sources of suggestion and information. The question before us at present, therefore, is not whether a girl shall remain ignorant of sexual things, but whether

The Changing Girl

her knowledge of them shall come from a right or a wrong source.

As to what is the right source, there can be no question that it is a girl's mother. Sex teaching in the schools is, of course, far better than knowledge picked up in the highways and hedges, which is usually incorrect and often corrupt, but it can never be anything but a makeshift. If a girl's mother takes a right attitude in the matter, her daughter will turn to her instinctively when questions connected with sex arise in her mind, and this gives the mother at once a great advantage over the school in the fact that she commands the opportunity to speak exactly at the right moment, whereas school instruction must be carried on at stated seasons without regard to individual needs. Again, a mother can introduce into her teaching the element of tenderness and reverence by which the sacredness of marriage and motherhood are impressed upon a girl's mind in a way impossible in collective instruction.

In conclusion, I would earnestly urge all mothers to get rid, once and for all, of the idea that ignorance and innocence are one and the same thing. A girl can understand every fact connected with sex and reproduction and at the same time be absolutely innocent and pure-minded, while, on the other hand, she may

The Social Changes

lack all accurate and definite knowledge on such subjects and yet be coarse-minded, if not actually corrupt. There is nothing in the facts themselves which can be harmful or degrading, because they are clean and pure, like everything that comes to us straight from Nature. It is the soiled and distorted medium through which they pass, when left to the hand of chance, that is responsible for their contamination.

Printed in the United States of America

THE EDWARD BOK BOOKS OF

Self-Knowledge for Young People and Parents
Edited by EDWARD BOK

Handy pocket form. Each, .35

The constant aim of this graded series is to be anticipatory. Each separate treatise is concise, lucid, never suggestive beyond the age limit.

FOR PARENTS

1. **How Shall I Tell My Child?** A Little Book for Parents by Mrs. Woodallen Chapman.

This, the first volume of the series, has been expressly prepared to answer the question that the title asks. Mrs. Woodallen Chapman, so well known as a practical counsellor on all matters relating to the child, has fully answered this question in this concise little treatise.

FOR BOYS

2. **When a Boy Becomes a Man.** A Little Book for Boys by H. Bisseker, M. A.

The second volume of the series is for boys of from thirteen to fifteen years of age. It is written by a skilled instructor of youth—one who knows the boy and his needs—and revised by a body of medical experts.

FOR YOUNG MEN

3. **Instead of Wild Oats.** A Little Book for the Youth of Eighteen and Over, by Winfield Scott Hall, M. D.

Dr. Hall's experience as a physician, a writer and an instructor of young men fits him to write with authority, clearness and persuasive power. Parents, teachers and all interested in young men should welcome this practical volume.

